

From Scratch: Tribal Colleges as Acts of Revolution & the Establishment of Pawnee Nation College as an Act of Community Empowerment

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First Move:

The act of establishing a tribal college¹ is an act of revolution.

How so? you might ask. To which I'd respond: establishing and operating a tribal college is revolutionary because:

- / It seeks (in part) to undermine 240-plus years of US policy AND to *correct* 500-plus years of European genocidal practices.
- / It seeks (in part) to unsettle/dismantle the settler/nation and its occupation force.
- / It seeks to empower and embolden Native students for the purpose of serving family, community, culture, and Indian Country.
- / It seeks to provide education and training opportunities which will allow students to secure appropriate (desired) employment – and thereby adequate resources for self, family, and beyond.
- / In this way, it seeks the dignity of work and creativity to meet personal, spiritual, financial, and community needs.

At least, that's a few reasons.

Here's one more: '*merciless Indian Savages*,' from the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

The passage reads this way:

‘ . . . The History of the present **King of Great-Britain** is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World. . . .

[And regarding one such injury . . .]

He has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured (sic) to bring on the Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the *merciless Indian Savages*, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes and Conditions.'

So, rise Savages, rise!

Second Act:

When the Navajo nation established Navajo Junior College (in 1968), it was a good day to learn. (Learn Navajo ways.) The Dine founded the first tribal college in the present-day United States. It was the first tribally-controlled institution of higher learning & the first accredited tribal college. They metaphorically said (in Dine, 'course): 'F/U US gov't.

We'll teach our students our way. They'll be Dine teachers & engineers & doctors & writers.'

Triple Play:

1st: Then (after the Navajo Nation did its higher ed. thing) lots of other tribal nations said: *This effin' shit is NOT working for us either.*

2nd: By that, they (tribal college administrators and tribal business councils) meant: You (Uncle Sam) have failed our Native / Indigenous / Nations / Students / Futures long enough.

3rd: Because >> Manifest Destiny is an American murder narrative >> murder at the Hands of immigrants //

And stolen are the land & songs / And broken are the treaties / And Noble are the savages, such noble & vanishing savages /

They said & recorded & recorded & 'preserved.'

Fourth Wave:

In 2002, I moved from Des Moines, Iowa to Pawnee, Oklahoma after being hired by the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma as an ICDBG Coordinator. ICDBG stands for Indian Community Development Block Grant. It's a HUD-based program (Department of Housing and Urban Development).

I moved because I couldn't find a tenure track position in creative writing – though I had a book published² which received strong reviews: ESPN, NPR (*It's Only a Game*), *Des Moines Register*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Pawnee Chief*, some literary journals, and numerous radio shows, etc.

Still, I got nothing.

I got one interview at MLA³ that year (2001), which was in New Orleans. It's hard to get productive stuff done in New Orleans as a tourist & all.

I moved because of 3 reasons: 1) love of a Pawnee woman, 2) reciprocity to the Pawnee Nation (more on this in a bit), 3) and bills – paying bills and student loans and no damn teaching offers or interviews, which means I had no teaching prospects (no creative writing future??) and no classes to teach.

The first thing the Nation asked me to do was to serve as the project manager for the construction of the Pawnee Nation Travel Plaza. (It's now called the Stone Wolf Casino.) The project had been stalled for a couple of years, and the Nation's leadership asked me to 'get the ball rolling' again. But:

I had no construction management experience or training.

I had no project management experience (aside from doing my own, self-driven projects as an undergrad and graduate student).

I had no professional experience aside from teaching.

So the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma took a tremendous risk. We both did.

Other projects would evolve, quickly.

The Travel Plaza was completed in 2003. After that, the Nation said 'Hey, that's good. Now help us build a Family Development Center (FDC), which includes a child care center and a fitness center.' The Center was completed in 2004.

They said, 'Here, write these grants too. You're a writer, so you can write, right?'

I said ok & fell more in love with my soon-to-be wife.

Meanwhile, as the FDC was getting completed, I was asked another question by the Nation:

'Would you be willing to work on another project – can you help us establish The Pawnee Nation Academy?'

'What's that?' I asked.

'It's like a career-tech school.'

'Is that like a college?'

‘Sorta.’

‘Sorta, how?’

‘Well, like a trade school.’

‘Cool. But why not establish a college?’ I asked.

They said ‘Hmmm . . . Okay, let’s do a college then.’

‘Okay, can we call it Pawnee Nation College?’

‘Okay,’ they said.

‘Wow,’ I thought. ‘Wait ‘til everyone (mom/dad/friends) hears about this!’

They said, ‘Ok, that’s enough daydreaming. Now get to work. Make our college.’

I thought: ‘This is why Mose YellowHorse found me all those years ago: so I could move to Pawnee, be with my future wife, and help the Nation establish a tribal college.’

Oklahoma was slow to join the Tribal College Movement.

(This is narrative concentrate – like orange juice popsicles; like a tribal college establishment / cocoon time-lapse.)

Fifth Dimension:

In 2004 I was appointed ‘Interim’ President of Pawnee Nation College (PNC) by the Pawnee Business Council. One guy on Council insisted the ‘president’ be called a ‘Superintendent’ because ‘that’s what the BIA⁴ called its head at Gravy U,’ which was the very derogatory epithet the Native students gave to the Pawnee Indian Boarding School (b. 1878-d. 1958).

At Indian boarding schools across North America, the point was to assimilate Natives into the ‘mainstream’ via industrial education [manual labor] programming. So Native kids were forcibly taken from their homes [isn’t that kidnapping?] by US gov’t officials and suffered extreme oppression at the hands of Euro-centric non-Natives. Typically, the superintendents at boarding schools greatly / enthusiastically / brutally enforced Dr. Pratt’s⁶ notion: kill the Indian, save the man. Killing the Indian = killing the culture = killing the 1st / Native language = killing the music = killing the religion > ceremonies > belief systems = killing the heart = killing the mind = killing the ability to learn (and the desire to do so).

Sometimes they killed the man (person), which killed both the Indian and the man. . . .

So, if you kill the Indian, you also kill the man, the woman, the boy, the girl, and subsequently hurt families, communities, personal & tribal histories, & all kinds of ways of knowing and being. The boarding schools were operated by the BIA; superintendents were BIA appointments. So . . .

I said, ‘I don’t think we’re trying to replicate the BIA here.’ The specific Business Council member in question voted AGAINST approving my appointment. The vote was 6 to 1.

Sixth Sense:

(Here's an anecdote about how brutal Indian boarding schools could be [told to me by a Pawnee tribal citizen not long after plans to establish a higher education institution were announced]:

'Yeah, I remember a story my gramma told me about coming here to Gravy U.

She said, 'It was the middle of fall. Middle of the school year anyway. And they brought us here by bus. We didn't talk a lot on the bus even though most of us knew one another. We couldn't believe we'd just been taken from our homes. Some of the kids were sobbing. You could hear them under their jackets. Not me though. I didn't cry at all. I just coughed. I'd been sickish all that fall.

'She said, 'So we pulled up, right there on the little circle. The bus driver says, 'All you kids, get your stuff & go stand on the sidewalk.' So we did. We grabbed our things, stepped off the bus, and right then became students at Gravy.

'Well, not one second after we got off the bus, a woman was yelling at us to get in single file on the sidewalk – shoulder-to-shoulder way. There was probably 30 of us. And this tall white man was there. The bony woman called him Dr. _____. Next thing I know, he's sticking a tongue-depressor thingy in my mouth and looking down my throat.'

'He said, 'You've been sick, ain't ya?'

'Uh-huh,' I said – the tongue depressor still in my mouth.

'Right then, he takes out a knife, some kinda scalpel or something. He reaches down my throat and cuts out my tonsils. I tasted blood instantly, then felt the pain, and down I went. I passed straight out.

'He did a tonsillectomy on me right there – no anesthesia, nothing. & Did the same thing to 6 other kids. When we came to, some of the other girls took us up to the dorm room. On our way to the dorm, I looked back & saw seven crimson pools of blood.'

That's what she told me, so I don't like this place.')

Seventh Heaven: 7 Generations / 7 Chances / 7 Liberal Arts / 7 Sages / 7 Stages (of Life):

- 1) Kids at boarding schools were not allowed to speak their first (Native / Indigenous) languages.
- 2) They were beaten if they dared 'talk Indian.'

- 3) The power of PNC (and other tribally-controlled institutions) is this: the curriculum includes Pawnee Language I, II, and III for a total of 12 college credits.
- 4) PNC had / has had academic agreements with several state schools, including Northern Oklahoma College (NOC), Oklahoma State University (OSU), the University of Oklahoma (OU), and (1 private school) Bacone College.
- 5) ALL of our academic partners accepted the credits for Pawnee language courses – 10% of a bachelor’s degree at OSU, OU, and Bacone. The fact that the registrar at OU, aka, at a university with the nickname ‘Sooners’ accepted PNC’s language classes was significant.
- 6) Our language teachers were Pawnee citizens who had bachelor’s degrees. Lots of Native and a few non-Native students took / take language classes.
- 7) Two PNC graduates also graduated from OU with master’s degrees in linguistics. They are now teaching Pawnee language classes in Pawnee – mostly at PNC, but they’re also conducting adult-ed (community) classes. (They should be pursuing PhDs in Linguistics.) They are Zach Rice and Taylor Moore. (See #20 below.)
- 8) Go Bobcats! / The PNC mascot.
- 9) In Pawnee ways, the bobcat represents the whole of the night sky & all its constellations.

(Note: present tense use / not the past tense / not an artifact / not peoples as an object of study / not vanished, or noble, or romanticized, or ‘gone.’ / but HERE – NOW! Contemporary folx writing poems, scripts, and plays; having babies – Native babies – who will grow up learning their Pawnee ways.)

- 10) One night in 2005, I got some gas at the Pawnee Nation Travel Plaza (a year after it opened). The cashier was Marcie Stephenson. I said to her, ‘C’mon Marce, aren’t you tired of this?’

She said, ‘God, this shit sucks.’

‘Agreed,’ I said. ‘Why don’t you take some classes at PNC?’

‘That’s not a real college.’

‘Wanna bet?’

‘Well, can I get some financial aid?’

‘Try & see,’ I said.

‘Bullshit,’ she said.

‘Give it a try,’ I said. Looking around, I continued, ‘What’s the worst that can happen?’

She looked around too – a chagrined / pinched expression wrinkled her face, ‘Right’ she said.

Ten (+) years later, Marcie has an associate’s degree from PNC (in American Indian Studies – with a leadership emphasis) and a bachelor’s degree from Bacone. She works at PNC in the admission’s office. She is one of my s/heroes. She is Comanche. She’s eyeing a master’s in library studies.

11) When I was working on the PNO Travel Plaza (back in 2002-2003), I worked with half-a-dozen, or so, guys (Native guys) who once had electrician's certificates, plumber's certifications, were hanging sheet rock, installing HVAC, laying tile, and pouring concrete. All their certifications were expired. 'Well, I just couldn't get back to Tulsa (or wherever it was) to get re-certified,' one of the fellas told me on the job site. I thought: WHAT the fuck is this!?

Then my thoughts went:

- a) How does this happen?
- b) How can they let their certifications go?
- c) How can we fix this crap?
- d) Let's start a college / vo-tech / ged program!
- e) Who can help us?
- f) How much money do we need?
- g) Will they be able to find jobs?
- h) Am I crazy?
- i) What courses should we offer? (& What should our degree programs focus on?)
- j) How do you start a tribal college?
- k) How do you start a tribal college from scratch?
- l) Will anyone want to attend? (How do we recruit students?)

This was about the same time the Nation asked me to assist with starting the school.

12) In a perfect world, there would be 573 (or so) tribal colleges in the U.S. That's because there are 573 federally-recognized Indian tribes, bands, nations, pueblos, rancherias, communities, and Native villages in U.S. (Oh wait,

in a perfect world, both colonists and the U.S. government would NOT have systematically and barbarically / savagely destroyed Native peoples and their nations, cultures, languages, lands, ecosystems, futures, etc.)

Back in reality, it'd be cool / ideal if each Indigenous sovereign w/in the U.S. could establish its own TCU, if it so desired (regardless of lack or abundance of financial resources).

I mean, there are about 4,600 institutions of higher education in the U.S. right now, so what's another 400 to 500? Pony up, feds, states, & local municipalities. To a much-much lesser degree, the tribes might also provide some resources like space and equipment. Oh damn, I can hear it now – *The astronomical cost of such an undertaking!* Yeah, yeah.

Two words (dip shit): treaty rights.

Two more (ass hat): human rights.

And: repurpose resources.

13) The narrative arc of the shared history between the Indigenous peoples of the Americas and those from Europe and European ancestry is tumultuous, at best. At worst it is a story of ignorance, stupidity, oppression, doctrinal manipulation, genocide, environmental destruction of numerous ecosystems and animal populations, cultural genocide, ethnic cleansing, calculated murder (via biological warfare and traditional warfare – and so, war crimes), political coercion and dishonesty, kidnapping (of children who were regularly & forcibly separated from their parents), Columbus, Custer, Sheridan, Sherman, Lincoln, Wild Bill, Pawnee Bill, etc. (on the part of whites).

a. & fuck you if you think Indians were victims.

This is not a victim narrative. It is a survival narrative.

b. & fuck you (again) if you think ‘whites won.’ The ‘final’ narrative is not written yet. We are on a continuum. See these writers / visionaries:

Samson Occum, William Apess, Zitka-la Sa, Sarah Winnemucca, George Copway, John Rollin Ridge, Alex Posey, Pauline Johnson, Charles Eastman, Lynn Riggs, D’Arcy McNickle, Winnie Lewis Gravitt, John Joseph Matthews, Vine Deloria, Jr., James Welch, Paula Gunn Allen, Mary TallMountain, & 100s of other Native writers currently plying their trade, like: N. Scott Momaday, Joy Harjo, Louise Erdrich, Leslie Marmon Silko, Simon Ortiz, Geary Hobson, Jim Barnes, Denise Low, Luci Tapahonso, Wendy Rose, Diane Glancy, Susan Power, Carter Revard, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Ray Young Bear, Janet Campbell Hale, Crystos, Duane Niatum, Barney Bush, Adrian Louis, Kim Blaeser, Linda Hogan, Joe Bruchac, Tiffany Midge, Natalie Diaz, Bojan Louis, Tommy Orange, Laura Tohe, Heid Erdrich, Allison Hedge Coke, LeAnne Howe, Sherwin Bitsui, Roberta Hill, Deb Miranda, Sy Hoahwah, Marcie Rendon, Brandon Hobson, Laura Da’, Layli Long Soldier, Tacey M. Atsitty, Arigon Starr, (sorry to leave out so many great writers). There are SO MANY more, really, so many: <http://www.ipl.org/div/natam/bin/browse.pl/authors>. SEE! Also: <http://www.colorincolorado.org/booklist/american-indian-authors-science-fiction-and-supernatural>.

14) In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Native kids regularly ran away from the boarding schools where they held captive. Here’s a poem by Louise Erdrich:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43079/indian-boarding-school-the-runaways>.

15) Mose YellowHorse (Pawnee) took off from Chilocco Indian School⁵ so often the Oklahoma Historical Society now holds over a dozen letters about his escape and subsequent return to the school. He did not like living away from his parents or Pawnee. He won 8 games in the Major Leagues. He was the first Pittsburgh Pirate in team history to win a home opener (in 1921). He liked being home.

16) The ‘Tribal College Movement’ is a thing. See: <http://www.aihec.org/>. There are currently 35 TCUs in North America. Quite a few have come & gone. (You won’t find PNC on this

list because it's not a member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (or, AIHEC), pronounced like Aye-heck.)

17) It's about jobs –

Good jobs –

And dignity

In Indian Country

And beyond.

Living wages.

Job Placement.

Degree Programs.

Grant applications.

Indian education.

Accreditation partner.

Tribal Council.

Native Languages.

Curriculum development.

Full scholarship.

Language preservation.

Certified instructor.

Community cohesion.

Good words.

Pay Check.

Pay Check.

Pay Check.

Native scholarship.

Council meeting.

My relations.

Grand entry.

Red Power.

Political enemy.

Honor dance.

Language revitalization.

Fry bread.

Full frig.

Give away.

Head dancer.

The 49.

Indian princess.

Y'r snag.

My snag.

Back roads.

Good tunes.

Link Wray.

Power chord.

Jimi Hendrix.

Psychedelic rock.
30 pack / (for 2).
Hey now.
Love you.
Trust land.
Casino donation.
Indian cemetery.
All, heroic
couplets.

18) Tribal colleges are community healers.

They put Native faculty members in front of Native students.

They put Native faculty members in front of non-Native students.

Many times, they put hope in front of fractured minds and in front of torn bodies. Too many times this is the case.

(Historical trauma is a fucker with handfuls of crosses, bibles, policies, theories, bureaucracy, and pedophilia clomping along in its horse-drawn carriage, or minivan, or [a mid-life crisis] ‘Vette, as it were.)

They provide first, second, third, and fourth chances (when necessary – and more, if needed.)

They nurture learning, not competition.

They are founded / imagined / created to serve Indigenous learners, their families, their communities, their histories & languages, their needs, desires, & dreams.

They create Native (Dine, Pawnee, Omaha, Lakota, Muscogee, Blackfeet, Menominee, etc.) teachers, electricians, healthcare professionals, plumbers, business leaders, heavy equipment operators, computer techies / IT specialists, naturalists, poets & writers, pipefitters, engineers, historians, and social scientists, among many others.

They teach Native science & warn against the techo-worship of western science.

They un-wrinkle (the colonizers’) historical timelines & wrap them in Native perspectives.

19) In the Fall of 2004, PNC offered its first courses. 23 students enrolled in four classes. It might’ve been a few more classes. That same year approx. 30,000 students took courses at TCUs in North America. (See: *The Path of Many Journeys*.)⁶

20) Some tribal college alumni and / or students of note:

Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota) (b. 1938) went to Haskell Indian Nations University. He won an Olympic gold medal in the 10,000 meters (1964).

Alfredo Zazueta (Tohono O'odham) (Tohono O'odham Community College) is a journeyman electrician at Kitt Peak National Observatory.

From Pawnee Nation College, both Taylor Moore (Pawnee) and Zach Rice (Pawnee) went to Northeastern State (OK) (NSU) and the University of Oklahoma (OU), respectively, to earn their bachelor's degrees. Then, they both completed Master's degrees in linguistic anthropology at OU. Now, they've joined forces (back in Pawnee) to teach community- and college-level courses in Pawnee language.

- 21) The Pawnees' traditional homelands were located in Nebraska. They were shew'd out of their places in the 1870s. The critical event that precipitated removal occurred on August 5th, 1873, when a party of Sioux (Ogalala / Brule) killed some 300 or so Pawnee men, women, and children at what's now known as Massacre Canyon in Nebraska⁷.

Some Pawnee citizens continue to think of 'the Sioux' as present-day enemies (and vice-versa, I hear). Some online sources claim the Pawnees 'requested' to move to Indian Territory. I've never heard this 'version.' In many conversations with Pawnee citizens, they state the 'Pawnee trail of tears' took place in 1874-75 when they were forced to walk from Nebraska to Oklahoma.

At one point in the early 20th century, the Pawnee population dwindled to 600 citizens. In earlier times, more than 20,000 Pawnees graced the central plains – this according to missionary counts. According to Pawnees, their men, women, and children were as numerous as the stars in the sky. Now, about 3,500 souls are counted among the Nation.

- 22) The Pawnees refer to themselves as Chaticks-si-chaticks, aka, men-of-men. The word / term 'Pawnee' is not a Pawnee word; it's French. It's that way with most tribal nations in the U.S., Canada, Central American, and South America – hell, Indigenous folks all over: Asia, the South Pacific, Australia, & New Zealand. Colonizers – ignorant AF – had no idea what they were doing & took no account of how Indigenous people named themselves or others or places. The English were especially egregious. (See all the disappeared & vanishing Nations on the east coast and in parts of the mid-west.)

(Apparently, religious freedom applies only to European folks seeking asylum.

And current immigration policy is a broken mirror populated with hypocrites who lack any empathy or intelligence or ability to consider perspectives outside of their own ethnic demographic.)

- 23) The great chief of the Navajos, Hastinn Ch'il Haajiin (Manuelito), said right before his death, 'My grandchild, education is the ladder. Tell our people to take it.' The Dine Nation and its people have done exactly that.

24) The Pawnee Business Council is the Nation's supreme governing body. My wife's grandma, Geraldine Howell, served on the Council when I first moved to Pawnee. She believed in the potential of PNC to transform / empower / & better the lives of Pawnees. My tenure as president at PNC spanned three different administrations. Each of the Council presidents was supportive of the College; other Council members were too; still others had to be convinced. Ultimately, this is how I framed the message:

'The Pawnee Nation has citizens who are languishing for lack of opportunity. Sure, choices for trade schools, colleges, and universities are nearby, but they exist to serve ALL of the citizens of Oklahoma (mostly the dominant culture), not the citizens of the Pawnee Nation.

'The Pawnee Nation and all the other tribal nations in this part of the state need educational opportunities that cater to Pawnees, to the other tribes in the area.'

Usually people nodded quietly.

25) A team of tribal executives, professionals, even volunteers helped PNC raise about \$8.5M in 3+ years. I didn't know how to write federal grants before I started working for the tribe in '02.

In the fall of 2007, PNC received a 5-year grant from the Dept of Ed for \$2.5M. The Native American Career & Technical Education Program (NACTEP) provided funding to establish PNC's Oklahoma Native Leadership Initiative (ONLI Option) program.

(The NACTEP program has conducted several 'continuation' competitions, and so in addition to the initial award amount, PNC has received an additional \$1.5M, for a total funding amount of \$4M.)

26) As a non-Native, it is humbling to have been a founding president of a tribal college. This has happened at several other TCUs.

The first PNC Board of Trustees (BoT) were a diverse and passionate bunch. They were a mix of Pawnee academics, educators, a couple of business members from Pawnee (town proper), and a PNO council member.

BoT meetings occurred quarterly. Initially, though, they were energizing and spirited affairs. People couldn't believe they were part of founding a tribal college. Eventually, they became torturous affairs, sparing matches full of over-questioning, over-justifying, over-documenting, & micromanagement.

And we were always chasing \$. Always more \$. More meetings with potential funding sources. More foundations. More grants. More. More. More. And politics. And the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. And DC. Always DC:

DC for annual appropriations. Meetings with Senate staffers / sometimes senators. With House staffers. With program officers from various agencies. To the Russell Senate Building

and the rayburn building. On and off the Metro. And all the concrete. All the suits – regardless of gender – so many suits. So much self-importance. So much national denial.

And a nation's BIG / CAPITAL city all full of itself without admitting its sins. Perhaps America has forgotten itself? Perhaps America has never known itself? Perhaps America has never come to terms with its schizophrenia? With its original sin?

- 27) The Red Power Movement⁸ was part of the revolution too. It was one of the sparks of the revolution.

John Trudell was a TCU all-star. So was Russell Means & Dennis Banks & Clyde Bellecourt & Eddie Benton Banai, Richard Ray is too. Vine Deloria, Jr. and Wilma Mankiller – they are Hall of Famers. Other TCU / AIS HoFers include: Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, James Riding In, Duane Champagne, Cornel Pewewardy, Michael YellowBird, Clyde Warrior, etc. Trudell became a Hall of Famer too. Greg Cajete earned his place, as did Dan Wildcat and Paula Gunn Allen. And then there's Tom Holm, Geary Hobson, and Jim Northrup – each 4 & 5-time all-stars. Henrietta Mann. Soon enough, there's Natalie Diaz, who leads the league in rebounding; she's piling up HoF credentials by the poem. Others will follow. Many others.

- 28) Though many / most Pawnee tribal citizens agreed in principle with the establishment of PNC, a number of citizens were skeptical – with good reason:

'How are you gonna pay for it?' they asked.

'Where are you gonna find the money?

'How are you gonna find qualified teachers?'

'What courses of study you gonna offer?'

'How are you gonna help my kids?'

In a room full of 200 Pawnee tribal citizens (in 2003), I answered all these questions & more: I said, 'We're gonna make their dreams come true.'

Too many people rolled their eyes. They had seen too many white guys promise love when the truth was obvious. I quickly heard rumblings about 'a savior complex,' & such.

/

In 2007, we held our first commencement. Over 80 people / tribal citizens attended. (So f/u.) I cried. It was taped. We had 4 grads. The next year we had 10 grads who received GEDs, training certificates, and associate degrees.

- 29) During the most intense days, I worked 12-18 hours. More than once I pulled all-nighters while trying to get a grant proposal completed – often with other PNO employees or volunteers.

By 2009, I was getting burned out – the grind of: making schedules / writing grants /

meeting with fundraisers / putting out student fires (on a daily basis) / negotiating the local, tribal, and national politics / constantly traveling to DC, Chicago (to meet with the Higher Learning Commission), and other conferences / meeting with the Board of Trustees (quarterly) /

- 30) Then, on Mother's Day 2010, I called my mom & asked if she was awake. It was 11pm (central) and 12am (eastern). They lived in Indiana. (I had already called her & wished her a Happy Mother's Day earlier in the evening.)

She said 'No.'

I chuckled.

I said, 'I've got something to tell you.'

She said, 'What?! I'm not awake.'

I was 45 years old. I had no kids. My parents thought the grandparent train passed them by – a long time ago.

I said, 'Wake up! You're going to be a grandma. Tell Dad he's going to be a gran'pa. G'night. Ok. Bye.'

'Bye,' she whispered.

I hung up the phone. Two minutes later she called back. 'WHAAAAAAAAAAT??????'

'Yep,' I said. 'Happy Mother's Day. Much better than 1983, uh?'

She laughed, 'Sure is!'

'Go back to bed. We can talk tomorrow.'

'Ok,' she said.

(. . . On Mother's Day '83, I was arrested for 'Illegal consumption of alcohol.' I got picked up after the car I was riding in got stopped & the driver got arrested for a DWI & illegal consumption. We both got thrown in the drunk tank. My dad always said to me: 'If you get arrested for drinking, or whatever, you just spend the night in jail & think about it.' So that's what I did.

Both my parents worked for R. R. Donnelley & Sons – a book manufacturing company – in Crawfordsville, Indiana. When they started working there in the 1960s, they were on the floor – my dad piled down books [from the book cutter] and my mom fed a gathering machine, which compiled the different parts of the book for final assembly and gluing.

They started out working class. My mom's dad was an undertaker; her mom served as the funeral home's bookkeeper, then as a clerk at a drugstore – after their divorce. On my dad's side, his mom was a stay-at-home mom, then served as a clerk at the US Post Office branch in Jamestown, Indiana; my dad's dad was a tavern owner who liked sampling his product more than he did selling it. At one time, his dad had three taverns in Crawfordsville. He'd go to all three and buy rounds 'for all his friends' – all Bukowski like.

These days, Mother's Day celebrations evolve into days of joy. I hope [for us all] they stay that way – always. . . .)

Our son was born January 12, 2011. He is named after Mose YellowHorse. I was the last male in our branch of the family tree – at least until he came along. I nearly fainted when the ultra-sound tech first informed us. All the men in my family said ‘Cheers!!!’ I said shew & thought *Now it’s on you.* (He doesn’t know yet.)

Then, 2.5 years later, our baby girl was born. She is named after her maternal grandma – the one on the Pawnee Business Council. Our daughter is a Pawnee woman through & through. I know because she says (even at 5), ‘I told you!’

31) Founding presidents are deeply connected to the schools they help establish. I am PNC’s founding president. No one loves PNC like me, or my wife, or Marcie, or the first BoT members (especially the chair, Dr. James Riding In).

32) Love is sacred. PNC is loved. It is sacred. Atius (God) was / is there. The work done by dozens @ PNC is sacred.

NOC is not sacred (oh, the scandals they keep & (that) run deep; see 1917-1919 Oklahoma Prep School; [see Muna Lee⁹]). Bacone isn’t sacred either – too many folks who claim God but don’t know (its) Native name.

When we stood on our sovereignty as PNC (and PNO) with the authority to award our own degrees, NOC didn’t dig our shit. They said, ‘You can’t do that.’ We said, ‘You racist assholes.’ (Note: one of NOC’s previous presidents blatantly tried to steal a casino / gaming program we [PNC staff & faculty] developed for a Department of Labor grant. He was caught trying to plagiarize PNC’s program, was called on it, and got all pissed as hell about it. Oh well.)

The next year we said, ‘Hey Bacone, whatchu got for us?’
They said, ‘Oh anything you’d like! What do you need the most?’
We said, ‘Our sovereignty as a tribally-controlled institution.’

So, when I left PNC in 2011, Bacone was our accrediting partner. They weren’t perfect at all – mostly because of the shitty snake-oil-salesman-of-an-administrator they had in a key leadership position. He no longer works at Bacone and left one helluva mess.

33) The point is this: PNC was conceived to address several problems, such as lack of

- a. Educational / learning opportunities for Pawnee students in & around Pawnee (as well as Native students from other tribal nations in the area – Osage, Ponca, Otoe, Kaw, Sac & Fox, Iowa, and Tonkawa).
- b. Opportunities to connect well-trained Native students with viable labor / job / employment opportunities – both locally (with the PNO, in Pawnee, and other surrounding communities).

- c. Cultural preservation opportunities (for all area Nations, but especially those focused on Pawnee language revitalization, Pawnee history, traditional Pawnee foods, and American Indian Studies).

To address these problems & to build community consensus for the project, one thing was clear: we needed solution seekers, not problem dwellers.

We made all kinda plans – recruiting plans, fundraising plans, strategic plans, and business plans (we did those first). We authored the first and second PNC Catalogs, a Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, & Staff Handbook. We took off to high schools, recruiting fairs, set up tables at ALL the powwows. We were a small but highly devoted team. Several of the original employees (most of whom I hired) are still at PNC.

34) PNC's motto is: 'Indigenizing Higher Education for All.'

35) Indigenize: To bring under the control of Native people.

We are Indigenizers. Full of Indigeneity.
Be an Indigenist. Indigenize
Like a champion.

Eight Miles High:

To many people, the U.S. is considered an *Occupying Army* on *stolen land* first inhabited by Indigenous peoples from time immemorial – at least according to 1000s of Native origin (hi)stories. Both the North and South American continents / lands are sacred to their first / original inhabitants.

The land / earth is a living organism: at the surface level with plants & animals, at the subterranean level with earthquakes & volcanos & tectonic plate movements, at the atmospheric level with hurricanes & tornados, at the astronomical level with stars & starlight & stardust & the moon with its tidal dances & sand mingling oceanic curly-ques. Landforms percolate/ rage / teem with life. We are all relations. E to W & N to S. SE to NW. & all points in between. There is no 'getting over it.'

See Ruth Muskrat Bronson.¹⁰

As the 1st caretakers of the two continents, the Indigenous peoples of N & S America created an OLD WORLD 10x more complex than the new world of Europe. See Egypt. See China. See Africa.

Revolution #9:

I want a space in this essay connecting separations of brown children from their families to the white space that's responsible for those separations and for occupying / perpetuating generations of colonial violence.

Taking brown children away from their brown parents is a / white / American tradition dating back centuries.

This is not new > captive narratives / boarding school jail cells / and, of course, Columbus / and colonialists in Virginia.

The separation of families creates cultural discontinuity. It creates disruption of work and community. It fractures imaginations, hearts, and minds.

It is one of the deepest narrative threads in the shared history between the Indigenous peoples of North and South America and Euro-ancestors.

10²:

Indig folx were the 1st working class people here / in America:

The 1st agrarian artisans & artists:

The 1st geographers & geologists:

The 1st *continental* scientists:

The 1st veterinarians & shape shifters & two spirits:

The 1st cartographers / biologists / doctors / priests / musicians / business strategists (traders) / writers & painters / engineers (of course) / maritime navigators / enviro-astronomers & eco-sculptors –

Sculpting the landscape to meet community needs: They were

The 1st corn / tomato / pineapple / blueberry / pumpkin / gum / pepper / & pinto bean *plant makers* (let that sink in, *makers, producers, & distributors*):

The 1st hunters, poets, philosophers, physicists, carpenters, & superstars:

The 1st butchers / meat scrapers / fire scouts / dendrologists¹¹:

The 1st ornithologists & whistlers /

The 1st heart breakers & song writers:

The 1st 49ers¹²: drummers / dancers / & whalers:

The 1st flautists & carpetters / seamstresses:

The 1st lovers to see in blue & 1st oceanographers:

The 1st hikers / ship builders & meteorologists:

The 1st moms, dads, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, & grandparents:

The 1st shapers of daylight:

The 1st speakers of prayers:

The 1st land protectors /
 Construction workers
 Waterway navigators
 Water protectors
 Path creators
 Deal makers
 In smoky
 Rooms:
 The 1st educators¹³:
 The 1st civilization creators:
 Constitutional authors
 Community developers
 & Surveyors
 Tricksters:

The 1st (human) observers of: Yosemite / the Grand Canyon / Niagara Falls / Black Bear Creek[#] /
 Yellowstone / 2nd Mesa / ‘Death Valley’ / Monument Valley / Redwoods / The Everglades /
 Black Hills / Crater Lake / The Arches / Carlsbad & Old Faithful / Caddo Lake / Denali /
 Glacier / The Tetons / Saw the Smokies come to life / The Rockies / The creeks & rivers, lakes
 & ponds / Vistas & overlooks / Estuaries & deltas /

– ‘course they all had different names, Indigenous place-names: these are (bastardized) Indigenous
 names (kinda, for the most part): Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, (maybe)
 Delaware, (maybe) Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan,
 Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota,
 Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin, & Wyoming. White people picked these Native /
 Indigenous names after finishing the long-term task of conquering & shewing them off lands
 whites deemed *desirable*, which turned out to be everywhere (even after Oklahoma).

The land is tired of beatings.

The 1st sub 4-minute milers¹⁴ / oceanic rowers / flame throwers / 1,000 yard rushers¹⁵ / & 1st time
 ballers in Mexico (w/o walls or borders)¹⁶ – the 1st / Aztec / Mayan / superstars / to conceptualize
 b-ball (not on hardwood but grass and bricks) / the 1st jump shooters with perfect arcs – from deep.

The 1st time rainbow walkers / river riders / lake gliders / stream sliders / lightning lovers / thunder
 throwers – all wunderkinds walking on water’s edge.

The 1st power chord guitarists¹⁷: The 1st AIMsters / Alcatraz liberators / BIA¹⁸ destroyers / and
 IHS¹⁹ doctors. The 1st Tribal Nation laborers: TERO²⁰ workers / Grant writers / Tribal planners /
 Tribal Governors / Tribal Directors / Prayer lifters.

And, always: the 1st people.

Finally, epilogue:

In 2011, I resigned my presidency at PNC.

I did so because I was exhausted; I missed my wife; I missed my writing life; I wanted long-term relief from the *founding president* grind / fatigue; I wanted a calendar populated with (at least a few) poetry readings. I wanted to hold my newborn son without having to rush off to an evening fundraising event. Et cetera and so on.

That said, it has been the greatest honor of my professional life (thus far) to serve the Pawnee Nation from 2002-2011. I went to Pawnee for two reasons: 1) to be closer to my SO and 2) to reciprocate / give back to the Pawnee Nation in a way that appropriately demonstrated my gratitude (see Mose YellowHorse). And because of PNC,

Work exists where none did. College classes exist where none did.
Degrees hang where none did. Commencements commence where none did.
Graduates in American Indian Studies exist where none did.

Pawnee higher education takes place in buildings once designed for assimilation and cultural bleaching. Now, the language rings out. Nowah – students and teachers say to one another.

Students complete classes and degree programs aligned with the needs of the Pawnee Nation (and other surrounding tribal nations).

The federal government provides funding for Pawnee language programming in a place where the language was once forbidden.

New institutions of higher learning opportunity are often scoffed at by the cynical or ignorant, sometimes rightfully so, but not in the case of PNC. By now, nearly 1,000 students have attended PNC. Since PNC began offering coursework, 79 students have graduated since 2007 (with accredited associate degrees) and 37 with industry-recognized certificates since 2013. Tribal nations represented include: Pawnee, Osage, Wichita, Iowa, Cherokee, Otoe-Missouria, Creek, Cheyenne & Arapaho, Comanche, Yakima, Kickapoo, Navajo, Peoria, Seminole, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Caddo, Ponca, Quawpaw, Sac & Fox, Kiowa, Citizen Potawatomi, Santo Domingo Pueblo, and Northern Paiute. Of course, PNC has also served many non-Natives.

The future is a muddy equation of chance, resources, & love. Better have plenty of each. Work is a good thing. Labor is a good thing too. By now, thousands of people (mostly Natives) have believed in and benefitted from Pawnee Nation College (and other TCUs across the country [and Canada]). Working together – across networks and temporary geo-political boundaries – has created work opportunities that lift all of Indian Country. May this good work get better across the next seven generations.

Aho! Turahe. (It is good!)

Notes:

- 1: Tribal Colleges, aka, TCUs, are institutions of higher learning established by federally-recognized tribal nations and are, therefore, identified as tribally-controlled. There are 36 tribally-controlled colleges and universities and 2 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools: Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU) in Lawrence, Kansas and Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
- 2: My first book, *60 Feet Six Inches and Other Distances from Home: the (Baseball) Life of Mose YellowHorse*, (Holy Cow! Press) was published in 2002. YellowHorse (1898-1964) was a citizen of the Pawnee Nation and played professional and semi-pro baseball from the late 1910s into the 1930s. In 1921 and '22, he played / pitched in 38 games for the Pittsburgh Pirates.
- 3: MLA = Modern Language Association. One of the organization's annual highlights includes its conference, which takes place in a major metropolitan area. Used to be, as recently as 10-15 years ago, where hundreds (even thousands) of job interviews occurred. It was a kind of academic.
- 4: BIA = Bureau of Indian Affairs. Part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, the BIA was established in 1824 by Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun (and without authorization from Congress). The BIA played a major role in separating Indian children from their families by forcibly sending them to off-site schools.
- 5: Chilocco Indian School was an Indian boarding school, which operated from 1884 to 1980 and oppressed Indian youth in the same manner as Richard Pratt's Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, which meant students were forced to observe strict military-style structure and rules, such being prohibited from speaking their first languages and practicing their own spiritual observations. Due to stark / harsh living conditions and consistent treatment of students, Mose YellowHorse ran away many times. YellowHorse was trained to be a carpenter. It was all trades – no professional training. School administrators insisted that students focus on domestic labor, aka 'actual work.' (See K. Tsianina Lomawaima's *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* by University of Nebraska Press in 1994.)
- 6: 'Path of Many Journeys' is a 2007 publication of the Institute for Higher Education Policy. According to their website, 'This report outlines both the challenges of college participation as well as the benefits of in higher education for American Indians and argues that higher education is one of the main drivers of economic and social development for all American Indian communities. It also discusses the role of Tribal Colleges and Universities on reservations and their contribution to the well-being of tribal communities.' See: <http://www.ihep.org/research/publications/path-many-journeys-benefits-higher-education-native-people-and-communities>. Alisa F. Cunningham is the author.
- 7: Massacre Canyon, near Trenton, Nebraska, was the site of an ambush / massacre by Sioux (Oglala / Brule) Indians against a Pawnee hunting party on August 5, 1873. The Pawnee hunting party (total number is disputed, between 400 to 700) included men, women, and children – many of whom were brutally murdered; some were raped, mutilated, set on fire, and

scalps taken. The total number of those murdered has been disputed – with estimates ranging from 75 to 300. In 1925, a reunion at the site occurred with men from both tribes attending. See: http://www.e-nebraskahistory.org/index.php?title=Nebraska_Historical_Marker:_Massacre_Canyon

- 8: The Red Power Movement: the American Indian Movement was established in 1968 to raise awareness about US / Native issues and to enact change (for centuries of genocidal practices) at the federal level.

AIS / NAS HOFers / All-Stars:

John Trudell (Santee Sioux / Mexican) (1946-2015) served as the National Director of AIM from 1973-79. He acted, wrote poetry, did music, and said lots of good words in way-too-short-a life.

Russell Means (Oglala Lakota / Yankton Dakota) (1939-2012) served as AIM's first National Director and became a prominent actor, musician, and, writer.

Dennis Banks (Ojibwe) (1937-2017) co-founded AIM. Banks is Native American leader, teacher, lecturer, activist, and author.

Clyde Bellecourt (White Earth Ojibwe) (1936-) co-founded AIM. He is an activist and civil rights organizer.

Eddie Benton Banai (Ojibwe) co-founded AIM. Activist and educator. He pioneered culture-based curriculum.

Richard Ray Whitman (Yuchee Muscogee Creek) (1949-) is an actor, writer, poet, photographer, painter, and activist.

Vine Deloria, Jr. (Standing Rock / Lakota) (1933-2005) *Wrote Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (1969). He served as National Director of the National Congress of American Indians

Wilma Mankiller (Cherokee) (1945-2010) served as the first female Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation (1985-95). Many books and films feature her tremendous accomplishments.

Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (Crow Creek Sioux) (1930-) is credited with (at the very least) co-founding the discipline of American Indian Studies. She continues to raise awareness through her writing.

James Riding In (Pawnee) (195?-) received his PhD from UCLA (in history) and served as the first chair of PNC's Board of Trustees. He is an associate professor in American Indian Studies at Arizona State University. He edits *Wicazo Sa Review*, which Elizabeth Cook-Lynn founded.

Duane Champagne (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa) (1951-) is a Professor of Sociology and American Indian Studies at UCLA, and Professor of Law at UCLA School of Law.

Cornel Pewewardy (Comanche / Kiowa) (195?-) is a retired educator, who most recently directed the American Indian Studies Program at Portland State University. His research focuses on how Native youth negotiate different educational paradigms and the psychological / social / cultural impact mainstream institutions have on the youth.

Michael Yellowbird (Three Affiliated Tribes – Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara) (19??-) directs the Indigenous Tribal Studies program at North Dakota State University. His work focuses on neurodecolonization.

Clyde Warrior (Ponca) (1939-1968) co-founded the National Indian Youth Council. He fought social and cultural justice for all Indigenous peoples. He delivered his speech, 'We Are Not Free,' in Memphis, Tennessee, at the President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty.

Greg Cajete (Tewa) (1952-) directs the NAS program at the University of New Mexico. His work reconciles Indigenous science within western academic spaces.

Dan Wildcat (Yuchee Creek) (19??-) teaches at Haskell Indian Nations University. He is a generational visionary whose work focuses on employing Indigenous perspectives to address issues of climate change.

Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo) (1939-2008) won numerous awards for her literary work, including an American Book Award, a Lannan Literary Fellowship, a Native Writers' Circle of the Americas Award (Lifetime Achievement), and a Hubbell Medal from the American Literature Society. She raised awareness about issues associated with Native women.

Tom Holm (Creek / Cherokee) (19??-) co-developed the 'Peoplehood Matrix,' which serves as a theoretical construct for teaching American Indian / Indigenous Peoples Studies.

Geary Hobson (Quapaw / Cherokee / Chickasaw) (1941-) is an author, editor, and retired English professor (University of Oklahoma). His pivotal work, *The Remembered Earth: An Anthology of Contemporary Native American Literature* (UNM Press, 1979) remains a seminal effort in Native letters.

Jim Northrup (Anishinaabe – Fon Du Lac) (1943-2016) was a newspaper columnist, poet, storyteller, performer, and political commentator. His insightful and often humorous commentaries were widely popular and widely published in a number Native-centric newspapers across the country. He was given a Native Writers' Circle of the Americas Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017 (posthumously).

Henrietta Mann (Cheyenne) (1935-) is an extraordinary educator and advocate for Native rights. She was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 2018.

Natalie Diaz (Mohave) (1978-) won a MacArthur ‘Genius’ Award in 2018. She seeks to preserve her first language and is a champion for Indigenous language revitalization causes world-wide. She played both college and professional basketball.

For more on the Red Power Movement, see: <http://socialistworker.org/2018/08/08/1968-the-rise-of-the-red-power-movement>.

- 9: Muna Lee (1895-1965) wrote about pan-Americanism and feminism. She was also an awarding-winning poet (for both her original works and her translations of Spanish language poets. She attended the University of Oklahoma, though she did not graduate from OU. She took a teaching job at NOC but financial hardships forced the school to close (for two years), which forced Lee to leave the state, move to New York City, and become involved in international (Puerto Rican) affairs.
- 10: Ruth (Muskrat) Bronson (Cherokee) (1897-1982) served as the Executive Secretary for the National Congress of the American Indians (NCAI) from 1945 to 1955. She wrote a scathing poem about the consequences of colonization, ‘Sentenced (A Dirge),’ when she was a student at the University of Oklahoma in the early 1920s. Here’s the complete poem:

Sentenced

(A Dirge)

They have come, they have come,
Out of the unknown they have come;
Out of the great sea they have come;
Dazzling and conquering the white man has come
To make this land his home.

We must die we must die,
The white man has sentenced that we must die
Without great forests we must die,
Broken and conquered the red man must die,
He cannot claim his own.

They have gone, they have gone,
Our sky-blue waters, they have gone,
Our wild free prairies, they have gone,
To be the white man’s own.

They have won, they have won,
Thru fraud and thru warfare they have won,
Our council and burial grounds have they won,
Our birthright for pottage the white man has won,
And the red man must perish alone.

University Anthology, ed. Joseph Paxton (University of Oklahoma, 1921).

- 11: Dendrologist = the study of wooded plants / trees / shrubs.
- 12: 49ers – not the gold diggers in Cali, Alaska, and Colorado, but rather, the Indian-style 49ers, the name given to those folx gettin’ it at the back-roads, after powwow – drummin’ and singin’ it up – usually ‘til dawn.
- 13: Native Education = Traditional Indigenous educational practices, which included teaching children about tribal-specific knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, and dispositions (see Alberta Yeboah, 2005).
- 14: Hawk Chief was a Pawnee tribal citizen who is said to have run the first sub-four-minute mile. According to Mary Anne Warde, ‘In 1877, he ran one mile on a measured course in 3:45, timed with a stop watch. To double check, he ran it again a while later – with the same result. That year the U.S. Champion needed 4:49 to finish the one-mile race.’
- 15: Jim Thorpe (Sac & Fox) (1887-1953) was the first American football running back / rusher to run 1,000 yards from Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to Yale, Oklahoma, to Canton, Ohio, to Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania – sadly.
- 16: Aka, the MesoAmerican ballgame. Aztecs, Olmecs, Mayans, and other folx played variations of a game during which they ‘threw’ a ball through hoop.
- 17: Link Wray (Shawnee) (1929-2005) created and popularized the power chord in rock-n-roll. His 1954 song ‘Rumble’ is the only instrumental to be banned from the radio (in New York and Boston – for fear it would incite teenage gang violence).
- 18: The BIA Takeover by AIM occurred in DC at the Interior Building. From November 3 to November 9, 1972, over 500 Native activists / protesters took control of the building (in observance of the Trail of Broken Treaties and) to raise awareness about the 500-year narrative of abuse and oppression
- 19: IHS = Indian Health Services. Woefully underfunded since 1955 – the year of its establishment.
- 20: TERO = Tribal Employment Rights Office (or Ordinance) = Indian preference. TERO was enacted to address deplorable rates of poverty, unemployment, and underemployment that exists in and around Native communities / reservations.

Author Bio

Todd Fuller served as the founding president of Pawnee Nation College from 2004-2011. Fuller's first book, *60'6' and Other Distances from Home: the (Baseball) Life of Mose YellowHorse*, is a mixed-genre bio published in 2002 by Holy Cow! Press. His second book, a full-length poetry collection, was published in 2015 by Mongrel Empire Press. His poems and essays have appeared in *American Literary Review*, *Apalachee Review*, *Broadkill Review*, *Cimarron Review*, *Crazyhorse*, *Hawai'i Review*, *New York Quarterly*, *Poet Lore*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Quarterly West*, *Red Earth Review*, *South Dakota Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Third Coast*, *Weber Studies*, *Wiczo Sa Review*, and *William and Mary Review*. Most recently, he co-curated an exhibition at the University of Oklahoma's Western History Collection, 'Red Dust Oklahoma: a Poetic History.'